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No. 48

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

One Sabbath evening, just before the hour for the closing religious service of the day, a group of young men had come together on a corner of the city streets. Their hearts were intent upon what they called "having a good time." And as those passed by who regarded the Sabbath as a day of peace, of Christian works and worship, and who were on their way to the place of prayer, the question was heard proposed in that group, "Where are you going?" It was to decide in what place of amusement or dissipation the evening of the Sabbath should be spent, and those young men answered it in a manner to suit their purpose; but it is also a question full of interest to us all, and one which, if truly answered, will indicate our destiny for eternity.

We are *all* going, as fast as time can carry us, into the future, to us unknown; but there are *some* for whom this inquiry points with fearful significance toward that future. Dear reader, how is it with *you?*

We will suppose you have never yet attended to the concerns of your soul; that you have cared for none of these things. How then shall this question be answered so as to meet your case? Where are you going? May eternal truth be impressed upon your heart as it never yet has been, while we answer for you as for one who must give account at last.

1. You are going *to the grave.* Have you ever seriously thought of this? Man of business, while buried as you are in the cares of this world, — while so eagerly striving for gold,—have you ever stopped to reflect, "Though I am doing my own will and seeking my own profit now, and putting far from me thoughts of dying, yet there is a grave in my path,

and my next step may be into it?" Man of pleasure, have you ever thought of this? While seeking happiness in dissipation, in all the vain things which belong to this life only, do you ever think of a time, which will surely come, when you shall say, "I can enjoy these things no more; I am about to lie down in the grave?" Impenitent, thoughtless man, old or young, whoever you may be, whose supreme love and desires are limited to this life, does the thought ever enter your mind, "The grave is before me; every day brings me nearer to it; there my worldly pleasures will be ended?"

But your acknowledgement that this is true is not a full answer to our question. You admit that your body will soon be in the grave; but will *you* rest there? Where are *you* going *then*?

2. You are going *to the judgment*. Open the word of God, and in the light that beams from the sacred page into the future, look upon that solemn scene. Imagine yourself there. You are no uninterested spectator. *You* are the prisoner at the bar. Look up and see upon the great white throne, Him who was once crucified for you; who loved you with a boundless love; who graciously invited you, urged you to come to him and be forgiven and saved. Now, he is your judge. Oh, how gladly you would see rocks and mountains falling upon you to hide you from his face! But you must await your sentence here.

Once you were in a world where pardon and peace were freely offered to you in the gospel. There you became familiar with the story of the cross, and while you saw others penitently going to Christ, confessing their sins and finding mercy, you turned away and hardened your heart.

You cannot say with truth, "While there was a possibility of my salvation, 'no man cared for my soul.'" You were often warned of your danger. Many prayers were offered for you, and you were entreated to make your peace with God. All the efforts of those who loved your soul were unavailing. The Holy Spirit pleaded with your heart. You would not listen, and at length He was grieved away for ever.

Therefore do you stand here self-condemned. You are able now to comprehend the awful meaning of the words which once you read so thoughtlessly, and now you make personal

application of them; they seem addressed to yourself alone: "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh: when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you." Prov. 1: 24–27.

Listen to your sentence, already pronounced against you by your own conscience—DEPART. But *where*, reader? What shall be the end of this sad journey? for that has not yet been reached. The sentence sends you further on. *Where are you going now?*

3. From the very gate of heaven you are going away into despair. No more shall you hear the precious words of promise to the penitent. No more will Christ invite, or his faithful ministers warn, or Christians pray. You have at last reached your journey's end. You have found your own place, and in it you will spend eternity.

Reader, as you contemplate such an answer to the question we have started, are you not constrained to cry out, with thanks to God that you are yet in a world of probation; that the truth of our answer has not yet been verified by your bitter experience; that you can pray, with the assurance that the prayer of the broken and contrite heart shall be heard? Are you not constrained to cry for mercy to that Saviour whom you have so long rejected; who has been knocking at the door of your heart so long, and who is still waiting to be gracious? Once more you are reminded, earnestly and affectionately, of your duty, and warned of your danger. Once more you are invited to come to the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," and be relieved of the burden of your own sin, and receive the peace which is not of this world. To every soul there is *a last time* for all such offers and invitations. As you read, remember that this may be the last warning which shall ever meet your eye. You are moving forward in the path already indicated, the end of which is so appalling, whether you are conscious of it or not.

Awake, then, from this fearful state, before it becomes a sleep of death! No longer put off the care of your immortal

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soul. Listen to the words of Jesus—"Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out;" and as you hear, make haste to come.

Then shall your answer to our inquiry be, "I am going forward in the path of duty as my Father shall reveal it while I live, humbly trusting in my Redeemer; and then I am going according to his promise, to enter upon the inheritance which he has purchased for me with his precious blood—an inheritance 'incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.'"

ORIGINAL HYMN.

BY REV. J. H. MARTIN.

Ye guilty sinners, turn,
  The downward road forsake:
Lest you in hell forever burn,
  That fiery, dreadful lake.

In vain shall you implore
  Your Maker's favor there;
He'll close against you mercy's door,
  And leave you to despair.

Now is th' accepted day,
  Salvation's offered now:
Then come to Christ, without delay,
  And to his Sceptre bow.

Your sins will be forgiven,
  Your stains be washed away;
And you'll be made the heirs of heaven,—
  Then come, without delay.

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